

## **Guidelines and Limitations**

### **Interrelated Water Management Plan Program Funds**

#### **Guidelines**

- The Natural Resources Commission (Commission) will develop guidelines, not formal rules.
- The guidelines will be reviewed annually by the Commission at its November meeting.
- The award of grants and subsequent distributions will be subject to continued funding and appropriation levels for the program by the Legislature.

#### **Eligibility**

- Only NRDs that agree to provide a minimum local revenue match of at least 20% of the project cost, either cash or in-kind services, will be eligible to receive funding. For purposes of these guidelines in-kind services means providing additional funds to your existing budget to hire staff or buy supplies necessary for implementing activities described in a grant application to the Interrelated Water Management Program. These funds and activities must be described in the grant application.
- In year 2007-08- the funds will be awarded to NRDs that are involved with the processes defined in Neb. Rev. Stat. §§ 46-712, 46-715 or 46- 739 or in studies to determine the need for a management plan.

#### **Targets for Distributing Funds**

The Commission will not set hard caps on how the funds will be distributed among the NRDs but for FY2007-08, the Commission will again strive to distribute 60% of the funds to NRDs that have no designated fully-appropriated or over-appropriated areas and that therefore cannot take advantage of the special 3-year levy authorized by Section 2-3225(1)(c).

Projects previously funded by the Program, but not yet complete, will have priority over new projects.

It is expected that these funds will be obligated within the year the funds are awarded.

#### **Priorities in Order of Priority**

1. Technical studies needed to make wise decisions on how to manage hydrologically connected surface water and ground water to achieve the purposes of water management planning, such as studies that will:
  - a. Increase our understandings of the connection between surface water and ground water
  - b. Analyze the economic environmental and or social impacts of management options

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2. Assist in implementing water management projects that will enhance the benefits derived from available water supplies, including but not limited to
  - a. Flow retiming of augmentation projects
  - b. Intentional recharge or conjunctive use projects
  - c. Assistance in implementing innovative incentive programs, except that no funds shall be expended for the retirement of irrigated acres.

### **Project Duration**

Projects may be for up to three years, but actual funding will be provided on a year-by-year basis, subject to continued funding by the Legislature.

### **Project Funds**

Grant awards in each year for which funding is available will be disbursed as follows. 60% of the amount will be paid upon execution of the project contract with DNR, and the remaining award balance will be disbursed on a cost-reimbursement basis.

### **Process**

- Project proposals will be submitted to DNR by March 1<sup>st</sup> of each year.
- The applications will be divided into two classes: Class 1 will be those basins that are fully or over-appropriated, and Class 2 will be those basins that are not yet designated. Ranking based on the priority criteria will be applied to each class separately, but the Commission will have the discretion to redistribute funds between classes.
- When applicable, DNR will convene a technical review committee to evaluate the technical merits of the project.
- The technical review committee may include technical experts from the DNR, the NRDs, the University and other governmental entities such as but not limited to the USGS, or DEQ as appropriate.
- DNR will provide an initial ranking of the projects to the Commission's Program Committee at the first meeting after April 30th.
- The Program Committee will make the final recommendations of which projects should be funded at what level to the Commission.
- The Natural Resources Commission will make the final decisions.

### **Ranking**

- In the initial ranking by DNR, points will be given to each project to assist in ranking the projects, but the final assignment of points is to be used only as a guide for developing the final project ranking list.

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- Proposed point assignment
  - Project that meets
    - priority 1 above 20 points
    - priority 2 above 10 points
    - none – eliminate project - -
  - Technically
    - very sound 10 points
    - technically flawed but could be corrected 5 points
    - not technically sound – eliminate project - -
- Multiple governmental or private entities involved in the project 5 points
- NRD has obtained funding for the project from other sources than Nebraska tax dollars, state or local 5 points
- Grants will be awarded on a merit basis except extra weight will be given to NRDs that are within 5% of their maximum levy limit 5 points

Once points are assigned they will be added to determine a final score.

**Additional Issues**

- There will be no cap on the amount of money funded to a given NRD or project.
- DNR will develop record keeping and reporting requirements and a contract to be signed by the DNR and the NRD.
- Quarterly reports will be required.